

VZCZCXRO1413
RR RUEHDE
DE RUEHMS #0897 2521143
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 091143Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0745
INFO GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 000897

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/09/09
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KTIP](#) [MU](#)
SUBJECT: SECOND TIP CASE CONCLUDED IN OMAN

CLASSIFIED BY: Victor Hurtado, CdA, Department of State, Embassy
Muscat; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (U) An Omani court convicted two expatriates of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) for forcing a third expatriate into prostitution. A front-page article in "Oman" (a state owned Arabic daily circulation = 38,000) reported on September 6 convictions in the Sultanate's second TIP case in the northern port city of Sohar. The Sohar Court convicted and sentenced the two expatriates on separate charges of trafficking in persons and forcing prostitution and mandated the concurrent serving of the two sentences. The more severe was for the TIP charge and imposed seven years in prison and a 10,000 Omani rial (US\$26,000) fine. According to the report, the convicted couple will be permanently expelled from Oman upon completion of their prison sentence. There will be no charges brought against the victim.

¶2. (C) Comment: The article shows a growing understanding in Oman of the value of publishing information about TIP cases. In a country loathe to publish anything negative, front page press coverage of criminal activity is a significant departure from the norm. Moreover, the coverage indicates increased official understanding of the nexus of issues involved including the reference to a "victim," the lack of prosecution of that victim, and the imposition of the longest prison term allowed by law for a simple TIP case. The prosecution of the case in Sohar, roughly 100 miles from Muscat, confirms that awareness - likely the result of on-going training and capacity building - has successfully moved beyond the capital. End Comment.
HURTADO